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FROM USMISSION UNESCO PARIS

SIPDIS

STATE PASS TO NPS - STEPHEN MORRIS

SENSITIVE

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SUBJECT: UNESCO - ISRAEL AMBASSADOR'S VISIT 28 MAY

¶1. (U) Israeli Ambassador to UNESCO Kornbluth met with Ambassador Oliver on May 28 to review possible issues of concern that might be raised during the upcoming World Heritage Committee meeting in Quebec next month.

#### Negative Sites on the World Heritage List

¶2. (SBU) Ambassador Kornbluth began the meeting by suggesting that the Israelis were considering ways to add other former Nazi concentration camps besides Auschwitz to the World Heritage List in the future. Kornbluth said that he understood that there had been an unwritten rule about only having one single "negative site" on the List, but felt that it might now be time to add other sites, given their historical importance and the urgent need to conserve them.

¶3. (SBU) Ambassador Oliver agreed that there should not be a limit on "negative sites", and gave the example of Goree Island in Senegal, as a site that has a negative place in history, yet is on the List today. At the same time, she suggested that rather than lobbying to eliminate a rule that doesn't exist, it would simply be better to put forward a nomination and have it advance based on its merits and outstanding universal value.

#### World Heritage Center's Review of Overlapping Properties

¶4. (SBU) Kornbluth expressed concern over the World Heritage Center's plans to institute a new review process described as a "consistency check of the Tentative Lists received, aimed at avoiding possible overlapping of proposed properties with those already inscribed on the World Heritage List." Ambassador Kornbluth said that he sees this proposal shifting decisions to the international staff in the World Heritage Center and away from the Member States represented on the WH Committee. Ambassador Oliver agreed that this adds a huge amount of work for the World Heritage Center, and is outside of its role. Kornbluth added that he does not believe that the WH Center should decide what a sovereign state can propose to add to the Tentative List. Ambassador Oliver said that she believed that this new process is designed to focus on Jerusalem, though it is drawn broadly to avoid a specific mention of Jerusalem. During the discussion of possible Jerusalem-related problems to anticipate in Quebec, Kornbluth said that Jerusalem archeology is an "ongoing event" by the Israeli Antiquities Authority, seeming to suggest that there could be some complaints about new digs within the city walls.

¶5. (SBU) This comment tied into an intervention the previous day by the Jordanian ambassador during an information meeting on Quebec held on May 27 when the Jordanians used the opportunity to signal their concern about the Israelis' again adding Jerusalem to the Tentative List. (Note: "The Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls" is

on the WH List as a Jordanian site). The Israeli proposal, ("Jerusalem - the Old City and Ramparts to include Mount Zion") is not new, and has passed with clear caveats (see next paragraph), which the Arab states agreed to repeatedly in the past. The election of five Arab states to the 21-member WH Committee could, however, change the dynamics in Quebec, where Jerusalem will surely be brought to the table.

¶16. (U) (Following for addressee's info is the text of previous decisions): \*Note: This concerns the property entitled "Jerusalem - the Old City and Ramparts to include Mount Zion" proposed by Israel as an extension to the "'Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls" inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1981, upon proposal by Jordan. The Committee at its 25th Session (Helsinki, 2001) endorsed the recommendation of the 25th session of its Bureau (Paris, June 2001) "to postpone further consideration of this nomination proposal until an agreement on the status of the City of Jerusalem in conformity with International Law is reached, or until the parties concerned submit a joint nomination". It should be noted that, the UNESCO General Conference in its Resolutions 32C/39 and 33C/50, affirmed that: "(...) nothing in the present decision, which is aimed at the safeguarding of the cultural heritage of the Old City of Jerusalem, shall in any way affect the relevant United Nations resolutions and decisions, in particular the relevant Security Council resolutions on the legal status of Jerusalem".

¶17. (SBU) Ambassador Kornbluth concluded by noting that Deputy Director-General Marcio Barbosa (Brazil), is apparently not planning to attend the WH Committee meeting in Quebec. Barbosa has been UNESCO's point person for issues involving Jerusalem. Kornbluth asked Ambassador Oliver to urge the Director-General to send Deputy Director-General Barbosa to Quebec to ensure that any Jerusalem related problems are kept under control. OLIVER